

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 17, 2003

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November 18 USCIRF hearing on Capitol Hill

WASHINGTON - Last week the Saudi government said that it does not fund radical madrassas. Numerous credible reports suggest otherwise. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has reportedly raised the issue of whether the United States should combat the madrassas as part of its efforts to combat terrorism. His deputy, Under Secretary Paul Wolfowitz has described madrassas as "schools that teach hatred, schools that teach terrorism." The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has recommended that Congress authorize and fund a public study to determine whether the Saudi government is directly or indirectly funding efforts to propagate globally, including in the United States, an ideology that promotes hate, intolerance, and other human rights violations, and in some cases violence, toward members of other religious groups, both Muslim and non-Muslim. What we seek are facts - whether they vindicate or implicate Saudi Arabia. This hearing will be a step in that process.

WHAT: "Is Saudi Arabia a Strategic Threat: the Global Propagation of Intolerance"

WHEN: Tuesday, November 18, 2003, 9:30a.m. - 11:30a.m.

WHERE: 253 Russell Senate Office Building

The Commission will hear testimony from the following confirmed participants:

[The Honorable David Aufhauser](#) , former General Counsel, U.S. Department of the Treasury and Chair of National Security Council Policy Coordinating Committee on Terrorist Financing.

[Robert Baer](#) , former CIA operative and author of Sleeping with the Devil: How Washington Sold Our Soul for Saudi Crude.

[Ambassador Martin Indyk](#) , Director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, The Brookings Institution, and former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.

[Dr. Mai Yamani](#) , Research Fellow, Middle East Program, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, London.

[View the Hearing Transcript](#)

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress.

Dean Michael K. Young ,
- Felice D. Gaer ,